CLAIMS

Therefore, having thus described the invention, at least the following is claimed:

- 1 1. A suture needle comprising:
- a shaft, the shaft being marked at least partially with a visual indicator; and
- a puncture tip at one end of the curve of the shaft.
- 1 2. The suture needle of claim 1, wherein the shaft is comprised of a front surface that is
- 2 proximal the puncture tip, the front surface including a visual indicator.
- 1 3. The suture needle of claim 2, wherein the visual indicator is a color.
- 1 4. The suture needle of claim 1, wherein the shaft is comprised of a rear surface that is distal
- 2 the puncture tip, the rear surface including a visual indicator.
- 1 5. The suture needle of claim 4, wherein the visual indicator is a color.
- 1 6. The suture needle of claim 1, wherein the shaft is comprised of:
- a front surface that is proximal the puncture tip, the front surface including a first visual
- 3 indicator; and
- a rear surface that is distal the puncture tip, the rear surface including a second visual
- 5 indicator;
- 6 wherein the first visual indicator is visually distinct from the second visual indicator.
- 1 7. The suture needle of claim 6, wherein the first visual indicator is a first color and the
- 2 second visual indicator is a second color.
- 1 8. The suture needle of claim 7, wherein approximately the entire front surface is comprised
- 2 of the first color and approximately the entire rear surface is comprised of a second color.

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- 1 9. The suture needle of claim 1, wherein the suture needle aids in visual perception of the
- 2 angle of orientation of the needle.
- 1 10. The suture needle of claim 1, wherein the suture needle is chosen from: a needle with a
- 2 curved cylindrical shaft, a straight needle, a ski needle, a cutting needle, and a tapered needle.

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- 1 11. A suture needle comprising:
- 2 a puncture tip; and
- a shaft extending from the puncture tip, the shaft including means for distinguishing
- 4 between a front surface of the shaft and a rear surface of the shaft.
- 1 12. The suture needle of claim 11, wherein the shaft comprises a curved cylindrical shaft
- 2 extending from the puncture tip, and
- 3 wherein the means for distinguishing between a front surface that is proximal the
- 4 puncture tip and a rear surface that is distal the puncture tip.
- 1 13. The suture needle of claim 11, wherein the means for distinguishing between the front
- 2 surface and the rear surface is a color.
- 1 14. The suture needle of claim 11, wherein the suture needle is chosen from: a needle with a
- 2 curved cylindrical shaft, a straight needle, a ski needle, a cutting needle, and a tapered needle.

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- 1 15. A method of using a suture needle comprising:
- 2 inserting the suture needle into a mammal;
- 3 viewing the suture needle; and
- 4 immediately ascertaining the exact orientation of the suture needle with no manipulation
- 5 of the suture needle.
- 1 16. The method of claim 15, wherein the step of viewing the suture needle comprises viewing
- 2 an indicator on the suture needle, where the indicator is only present on the front surface of the
- 3 suture needle, proximal a puncture tip.
- 17. 1 The method of claim 15, wherein the step of viewing the suture needle comprises viewing
- 2 an indicator on the suture needle, where the indicator is only present on the rear surface of the
- 3 suture needle, distal a puncture tip.
- 1 18. The method of claim 15, wherein the step of viewing the suture needle comprises viewing
- 2 the needle on a video monitor connected to an endoscope, the endoscope being located in the
- 3 mammal.
- 1 19. The method of claim 15, wherein the step of immediately ascertaining the exact
- 2 orientation of the suture needle comprises determining the angle of rotation of a puncture tip on
- 3 the suture needle away from a viewer.

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1 20. A method of making a suture needle, comprising the steps of:

- 2 providing a suture needle; and
- 3 marking at least a portion of the suture needle with a visual indicator.
- 1 21. The method of claim 20, wherein the step of marking a portion of the suture needle
- 2 comprises marking a surface of a shaft of the needle chosen from the front surface and the rear
- 3 surface.